

OCEAN CLASS AGOR MEETING FOR POTENTIAL OFFERORS
27 July 2009

1. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

Q1: Sec I.4.a (p. 1) and Sec. IV.1.(a) (p. 5): Preliminary indication of interest. What is the form for this response to ONR (email ok?)? Who is it addressed to (Tim Schnoor?)? From what authority level does it need to originate (Dean?)?

R1: Submit via Email. Details will be provided in the final Announcement.

Q2: Sec I.6 (p. 2): It is stated that answers will be posted weekly on the ONR Code 32 Web page. Will questions be posted as well?

R2: Yes, the questions will also be posted. Questions and answers related to the final Announcement will be disseminated via Amendments on the ONR Code 32 Web page. Timing of postings will vary according to complexity and volume of questions.

Q3: Sec. I.8 (p. 3): "Two Navy-owned ships are expected to be replaced in the Navy's inventory by AGORs 27 and 28." This seems at odds with the IV.2.v.Vessel Nomination (p. 6), which states the offeror can nominate any UNOLS Global or Intermediate Class vessel for turn in. Can it be stated that there will be no preference to select operators who can retire Navy ships?

R3: There will be no preference to select operators who can nominate Navy ships. The language at Section 1.8 referenced in the question will be clarified in the Announcement. Operator Selection will be based on the evaluation criteria in the Announcement.

Q4: Sec. I.9 (p. 3): "Offerors seeking selection as the vessel operator must demonstrate the existence of, or potential for, a strong research program which supports the program goals, fully utilizes the vessel, and sustains its operating and maintenance costs." This indicates full utilization of the vessel by the operator institution. It is suggested that this requirement be modified as it differs from the operator acting as a UNOLS operating member and brokering operations amongst all user requests.

R4: The intent of the statement was not to place the responsibility for brokering operations amongst all user requests on the operating institution. This will be addressed in the final Announcement.

Q5: Sec. II, III.1., IV.2.iv (p. 3, 4, 6). How does ONR define a "consortium of institutions"? What level of agreement is expected? Can it be stated that no preference will be given to consortiums, or does the ONR view consortiums as better able to meet certain evaluation factors?

R5: ONR defines a "consortium of academic institutions" as a formal association of two or more United States academic institutions which all conduct graduate level research programs in ocean sciences. A written memorandum of agreement signed by the directors of the oceanographic/academic research programs or equivalent is

required. No preference will be given to a consortium, nor is it felt that a consortium would be better able to meet evaluation criteria.

Q6: Sec III.1 (p. 4): "jointly support the research vessel's operations and maintenance throughout the initial five-year charter period". Is "support" intended to mean financial support? Should this include what is outlined in IV.3.c.v.Cost Estimates (p. 8)?

R6: Support is intended to include all activities necessary to ensure the successful and safe operations of the ship for the benefit of funded research, and to ensure the material longevity of the ship through proper maintenance.

Q7: Sec.IV.3.c.i (p. 8): Existing Infrastructure. Is this statement intended to define the personnel who would execute duties under IV.3.c.v Cost Estimates " for participation in and management of the design, construction and pre-delivery activities."

R7: In general, yes. We would expect there to be a requirement for institutional infrastructure (management, financial, administrative, legal, etc.) to support those designated personnel actively engaged in designs reviews, shipyard construction, delivery etc.

Q8: Will IV.3.c.v pay for IV.3.c.i?

R8: Yes, but note Section IV.3.c.v (page 9 of the draft solicitation) "The notional budget is understood to be a preliminary cost estimate. The selected operators will be required to submit a formal technical and cost proposal to ONR following selection. Financial support of the activities listed above will depend on the availability of Navy funding."

If negative, what does IV.3.c.i mean? **Not applicable.**

Q9: Sec. IV.3.e (p. 9): Past Performance. Is it ok to describe results from longer than 5 years ago? Might this be stated "over at least the past five years"?

R9: Yes, it is permissible to describe results from longer than 5 years ago, but remember to "briefly" describe past performance. The Government is interested in recent performance, which would be considered more relevant to this effort.

Q10: General Question: If we use web links for reference material, can we expect reviewers to review them?

R10: No. Proposals shall be stand-alone.

Q11: The Ocean Class Vessels certainly will certainly have a strong suite of acoustic sensors and an improved capability for ocean acoustic research over existing UNOLS vessels: Does ONR envision an increased emphasis on ocean acoustic field programs for this class of ships?

R11: ONR's acoustic field programs have been, and will be driven by Navy requirements. ONR's goal is to outfit the general-purpose Ocean Class vessels so as to make them as useful, flexible and available as possible for all types of research.

Q12: Will there be a requirement or an expectation that classified research may be a component of future ONR programs on these Ocean Class vessels?

R12: The Ocean Class ship design is not expected to include “built-in” capabilities for support of classified research. Any future requirement for classified research on these vessels could be supported on a case-by-case basis, with the addition of properly outfitted vans or modules.

Q13: Factor 1 item (ii) (page 6) could be interpreted to suggest the selected Operator institution will have some degree of preferential use of the ship for its own research activities during the first three years or even for 5-10 years. If so, would this mean that how the ship is scheduled would be different from the typical UNOLS scheduling process during these first years of operation?

R13: Factor 1 should not be interpreted in this way. There is no intention to change the UNOLS scheduling process, nor to provide exclusive, preferential use of the ship for its own research activities during the first three, five or ten years of operation. Support and scheduling of academic curriculum objectives (e.g., student cruises) and maintenance activities in concert with the normal UNOLS ship scheduling process would be the expected limited exceptions.

Q14: Collection of some at-sea data (e.g., ADCP, multibeam, underway sensors, and other acoustic sensors) requires a shift in marine technician capabilities to include "real time" data processing skills, in addition to equipment handling and operations. Does ONR anticipate a work force paradigm shift?

R14: ONR does not anticipate a work force paradigm shift. UNOLS is addressing the recruitment, retention and training of marine technicians to support the evolving requirements of support to ocean research. This initiative is a separate project distinct from the AGOR Operator Selection Announcement.

Q15: Personnel: How many marine technicians per cruise will typically provide support at sea on the Ocean Class AGOR? This will define the maximum complement envisioned for the marine technician group supporting this vessel.

R15: The number of marine technicians is expected to be determined by the requirements of the research, the institutional approach to filling the marine technician needs on its vessel, and the evolution of the marine technician position as it is addressed by UNOLS.

Q16: Page 8 asks for Operation cost estimates for the first three years. One top Factor in the bidding competition will be exciting science. Hence, will you provide guidance to “level the playing field” regarding operation cost estimates, such as, price of fuel; number of days of operation per year (e.g. a full operation year for Ocean Class); number of nautical miles steamed; crew size; assumed mix of distant versus local ports, affecting travel and agent fees?

R16: This will be addressed in the final Announcement.

Q17: Would ONR like a bottom-line estimate of the day-rate for ship and tech support, given a full operational year?

R17: No, this is not required.

Q18: Given a ship design/build "team", a NAVSEA oversight "team" and a two future operator representatives all co-located at the construction shipyard, while the "representative" is paid by the Operator, to whom does he/she report and what real authority does he/she have?

R18: The operator representative will be paid by federal funds through a contract and will report as per the contract to the Government. In the past, the contract has been between ONR and the operating institution. The roles of the representative will include design review attendee in Phase I and Phase II, reviewer of data deliverables in Phase I and Phase II, technical advisor to Phase II source selection, and witness to production and testing in Phase II. The representative may also be asked to advise NAVSEA/PEO Ships on various aspects of the ship design related to the science mission or shipboard operations.

Q19: In preparing cost estimates for construction and pre-delivery activities, should we assume a specific part of the country where these activities will take place?

R19: This will be addressed in the final Announcement.

Q20: Outfitting: It is not clear who is responsible for selecting, purchasing, installing and testing all the scientific instrumentation and equipment, and when major science equipments (e.g., multibeam) are to be installed.

R20: NAVSEA/PEO Ships is responsible for procuring, installing and testing major science equipment, Mission Equipment (ME), described in Attachment J-6, Mission Equipment Specification, to the Ocean Class AGOR Solicitation (solicitation number N00024-09-R-2212).

Q21: Who develops and undertakes the post-shipyard performance testing of scientific instrumentation and equipment?

R21: The Mission Equipment (ME) described in Attachment J-6, Mission Equipment Specification, to the Ocean Class AGOR Solicitation (solicitation number N00024-09-R-2212) will be tested during Mission Trials (MT). The operating institution will operate the ship at the time of MT. NAVSEA/PEO Ships will provide necessary expert personnel for the factory acceptance tests (FAT), harbor acceptance tests (HAT), and sea acceptance tests (SAT) associated with the ME.

Q22: Will members of the science community, and/or contractors be involved in this testing?

R22: The selected institution will be operating this vessel during this period. At this time NAVSEA/PEO Ships plans to utilize contractor personnel and Naval Oceanographic Office (NAVOCEANO) personnel to accomplish the Mission Trials (MT). Appropriate representatives from the operating institution and experts from the science community will be invited to participate in and support the testing.

Q23: Will shakedown and trials be conducted in both shallow and deep water, regardless of shipyard location?

R23: Yes. In order to verify the sonar self-noise performance of the ships during Builder's Trials, depths of at least 1000 m will be required. In order to fully verify the performance of the Mission Equipment (ME), Mission Trials will take place in shallow (less than 1000 m) and mid-depth water (3000 to 5000 m). If possible from the shipyard location, trials will be conducted in deep water (greater than 5000 m) as well.

Q24: Who is responsible for certifying the performance of the scientific instrumentation?

R24: NAVSEA/PEO Ships, as the acquisition agent for the Mission Equipment (ME), will have responsibility for certifying the performance of the Mission Equipment (ME). Other equipment necessary for acceptance as a UNOLS vessel will be the responsibility of the operating institution.

Q25: Cost Estimates: Items (D) and (E) on page 8-9. What is exactly meant by "Support"?

R25: In this context, "Support" means "institutional participation"

Q26: Please clarify: The shipyard will presumably not be responsible that the MES work properly, but the ship must meet certain noise and bubble sweep-down requirements. So what items, like a bubble monitoring system may we assume will be installed and operating before delivery? Who will be responsible if the multi-beam system does not perform as expected due to flow noise or radiated noise factors?

R26: An Acoustic Monitoring System (AMS) will be installed by the shipyard, as described in Attachment J-6, Mission Equipment Specification, to the Ocean Class AGOR Solicitation (solicitation number N00024-09-R-2212). To verify performance with respect to bubble sweepdown, the AMS will include test hydrophones and video cameras. Ultimate responsibility for the performance of the multi-beam system remains with NAVSEA through the completion of the testing.

Q27: If the Operator institution or consortium installs a mission-critical piece of equipment on the ship for a particular funded program, and this results in additional use of the ship by various sponsors, how does the Operator gain "credit" for generating the additional demand for ship days and increased cost-effectiveness?

R27: Proposers should address potential efficiencies or cost-effectiveness measures in the narrative related to Factor 4 ("EFFICIENCIES") of the Announcement. The discussion should provide the basis for the proposer's conclusion that the initiative will enhance efficiency as described in the factor.

Q28a: Clarify conflicting statements: "Two Navy-owned ships are expected to be replaced in the Navy's inventory by AGORs 27 and 28." Vs. "Offeror must nominate at least one current Global or Intermediate Class UNOLS research vessel for turn-in, which ONR anticipates would be removed from the academic fleet prior to AGOR 27 and 28 delivery." The contradiction is that the Intermediate Class vessels are not Navy-owned.

R28a: The solicitation recognizes the fact that nomination of non-Navy owned ships (e.g. Intermediate Class) must be approved by the owner of that ship, and a letter of authorization to nominate non-Navy ships must be submitted with the proposal.

Q28b: The two Navy ships that are indicated in UNOLS fleet improvement plans to be retired are the Melville at SIO and Knorr at WHOI. Will ONR cease to be the owner of these vessels if an Intermediate vessel is turned in?

R28b: As indicated in the UNOLS Fleet Improvement Plan, the notional end-of-service-life for AGORs 14 and 15 is 45 years, and occurs at approximately the time of planned delivery for AGORs 27 and 28. The timing and future disposition of Navy-owned research vessels will be determined in accordance with Navy and US academic research requirements for scientific research at sea, the timing of delivery of fleet renewal ships, and the Navy's plan to maintain a research fleet of six vessels. This process will take place irrespective of the nomination of a non-Navy owned Intermediate Class UNOLS vessel for turn-in.

Q29: If a consortium of institutions is formed, does the Navy expect that proposals for pre-delivery support and outfitting and vessel operations come only from the lead institution or cooperatively from more than one institution in the consortium?

R29: ONR expects all members of the consortium to participate in the preparation of the content of the proposal. Proposals will be required to include a letter of agreement signed by the member institutions of the formal consortium. The award of a contract for pre-delivery support and outfitting or vessel operations (grant) would be made by ONR to the lead institution.

Q30: If the former, may the lead institution subcontract work to the partner institution(s) in the consortium?

R30: Yes, the lead institution may subcontract work to the partner institution.

Q31: Format of Proposals -- Does the 75 page limit include the required front matter, i.e., cover page, table of contents, summary, consortium agreement?

R31: This will be addressed in the final Announcement.

Q32: Is there a specified minimum font size, margin size, or other such details? Is color allowed?

R32: This will be addressed in the final Announcement. .

Q33: Are CVs of key staff and scientists required/beneficial? If CVs are encouraged, are they to be considered part of the page count?

R33: Short CVs of personnel involved in the management and oversight of the design and construction phase such as the project are encouraged; these CVs are included in the 75 page limit.

Q34: Education and Outreach are not mentioned anywhere in the Draft Announcement; what role will education programs and outreach beyond funding agencies and scientists play in ONR's evaluation of the proposal?

R34: This will be addressed in the final Announcement.

Q35: What is the target date for ONR to issue the FINAL ANNOUNCEMENT for Operator Selection for AGOR 27 and AGOR 28?

R35: The target date for issuing the Final Announcement is mid to late August, 2009.

Q36: Please describe the review process for selecting the winning two Operators of these two Ocean Class Vessels. In particular what role, if any, will other major funding sources for science operations of UNOLS vessels, such as NSF, have in deciding who will operate these vessels?

R36: Section V (page 10 of the draft announcement) states “Proposals will be evaluated by ONR with the assistance of the NSF and the Office of the Oceanographer of the Navy. ONR reserves the right to utilize UNOLS representatives or other technical experts not related to any offeror to provide technical assistance to the Government's evaluators.” The Chief of Naval Research is the selecting official.

2) ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AT THE MEETING

Q37: During Phase I, will operator representation at quarterly review be limited to one person?

R37: It is recommended that the operator representative be limited to one person to reduce costs and provide continuity.

Q38: Is DPS called out in the spec as 24/7 use vice occasional (like docking)? This is an air-borne noise and radiated noise issue in AGOR 23 class

R38: Per Attachment J-1, Ocean Class AGOR System Specification, to Solicitation N00024-09-R-2212, the DPS will be required to operate continuously for long periods (up to the 40 day endurance) and to operate in any mode with any combination of propellers, rudders, and thrusters.

Q39: Is full crew on board for Acceptance Trials? Is full crew on board for Final Contract Trials?

R39: At this time, NAVSEA/PEO Ships plans to accommodate up to a total of twelve operator personnel, including four senior members of the ship's crew and the operator representative on board during Acceptance Trials (AT).

Final Contract Trials (FCT) will occur after delivery and prior to the end of the twelve month Guaranty Period, and will be operated by the operating institution at that time

Q40: Question: Can we get a copy of the attendees list?

R40: Yes, the attendee list will be posted on the Code 32 Web Page.

Q41: Do you intend to conduct a site visit?

Q41: The decision to conduct site visits will be made after proposals are received.

Q42: Can you comment on what ONR expects for a detailed work plan in Factor 3, "Predelivery support: Outfitting: given the NAVSEA role in this process?

R42: See response to question 18 regarding the role of the Operator.

Q43: Is there a draft limitation on the new class?

R43: Per Attachment J-1, Ocean Class AGOR System Specification, to Solicitation N00024-09-R-2212, the ships are required to have a maximum 17 foot navigational draft with any retractable appendages retracted, and including service lift allowance.

Q44: Since much of the mission equipment will be installed after delivery, how should the time and cost of that be included in the proposals?

R44: The cost of installing the Mission Equipment will be borne by the Navy. See attached Ocean Class AGOR Post Delivery Schedule for more details.